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**ACP-323952-25 - Rosslare Europort ORE - Wexford County Council report**

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**From** Paul Murphy (Planning) <paul.murphy2@wexfordcoco.ie>

**Date** Tue 2/24/2026 11:53 AM

**To** Marine <marine@pleanala.ie>

 1 attachment (2 MB)

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Good morning,

Please find attached digital copy of Wexford County Council's report regarding ACP-323952-25 – Rosslare Europort ORE. Original has been sent today by registered post.

Kind Regards,

Paul Murphy

**Paul Murphy**  
**Assistant Staff Officer**  
**Planning**

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Tá an t-eolas sa ríomhphost seo agus in aon chomhad a ghabhann leis rúnda agus ceaptha le haghaidh úsáide an té nó an aonáin ar seoladh chuige iad agus na húsáide sin amháin. Is tuairimí nó dearchtaí an údair amháin aon tuairimí nó dearchtaí ann, agus ní gá gurb ionann iad agus tuairimí nó dearchtaí Comhairle Contae Loch Garman. Má bhfuair tú an ríomhphost seo trí earráid, ar mhiste leat é sin a chur in iúl don seoltóir nó le [customerservice@wexfordcoco.ie](mailto:customerservice@wexfordcoco.ie). Scanann Comhairle Contae Loch Garman ríomhphoist agus ceangaltáin le haghaidh víreas, ach ní ráthaíonn sé go bhfuil ceachtar díobh saor ó víreas agus ní glacann dliteanas ar bith as aon damáiste de dhroim víreas.

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23 February 2026

An Coimisiun Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1  
D01 V902

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTS 2000-2010 (as amended)**

**Planning Reg No:** ACP-323952-25

**Applicant:** Iarnrod Eireann

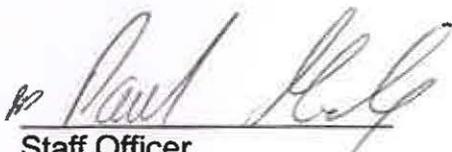
**Proposed:** Proposed development of Rosslare Europort Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Hub

**Location:** Located north west of Rosslare Europort and on lands located in Ballygerry Townland, St. Helen's, Co. Wexford

A Chara,

In accordance with Section 291(4) of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended), please find enclosed Wexford County Council's report regarding Planning Register Number ACP-323952-25.

Mise le meas,



Staff Officer  
Planning and Development



**A Maritime Area Planning Application has been lodged with  
An Coimisiún Pleanála in respect of the Rosslare Offshore  
Renewable Energy Hub.**

In accordance with section 291(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as a coastal planning authority, you may, not later than 10 weeks (or such longer period as may be specified by An Coimisiún Pleanála) from the making of the section 291 application in respect of the proposed development, prepare and submit to An Coimisiún Pleanála, a report setting out the views of the coastal planning authority in relation to the proposed development, having regard in particular to the matters to which a coastal planning authority is required to have regard in accordance with subsection (2) of section 34 and subsection (2) of section 282 in relation to an application referred to in subsection (3) of section 281.

In addition to the above mentioned report, An Coimisiún Pleanála may request a coastal planning authority to furnish such information as An Coimisiún Pleanála may specify in relation to:

- (a) the implications of the proposed development for maritime spatial planning,
- (b) the implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development in the functional area concerned, and
- (c) the likely effects of the proposed development on the environment or any European site.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development. The planning documents, planning drawings, EIAR and NIS have been published on the following website for the purpose of the application: [www.rosslarehub.ie](http://www.rosslarehub.ie)

The application is also available for inspection or purchase at the offices of the Planning Authority, Wexford County Council, Carricklawn, Wexford during its public opening hours.

Any submission or observation in relation to the proposed development must be received by An Coimisiún Pleanála not later than 5.30p.m. on the **24<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

Any enquiries relating to the application process should be directed to the Marine Area Planning Section of An Coimisiún Pleanála (Tel: 01 8588100).

## **Introduction**

This Planning Statement is submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála in support of a planning application submitted by Iarnród Éireann for approval of the EIAR and development consent for the proposed Rosslare Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE). The Rosslare Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Hub will provide a facility for the efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components to facilitate the installation of offshore wind energy projects.

Rosslare Harbour strategic position offers exceptional proximity advantages for ORE operations, located in the Irish and Celtic Seas.

The project proposes to deepen the access channel to the port and create additional port capacity, meaning larger vessels will be able to call to Rosslare that cannot currently use the port. The facility will allow for the construction, operation and maintenance of the components needed for the development of offshore wind turbines in the Irish and Celtic seas.

Wexford County Council recognises that the improvement and the construction of new piers and harbours is essential in order to provide the necessary infrastructure to maximise the potential of marine renewable energy. The Climate Action Plan 2019 recognises the crucial role of ports in facilitating the necessary development of both offshore renewable generation and grid infrastructure, requiring investment to handle plant, equipment and cabling, and the associated shipping during the construction, operation and maintenance phases of future projects. Lands around Rosslare Europort also have potential for marine related industry and renewable energy.

Wind energy is currently the largest contributor of renewable energy and the sector can make a significant contribution to meeting National renewable energy targets. This section of the Report sets out the strategic policy context, which is applicable to the Proposed Development. The statutory planning policy context, along with an assessment of the Proposed Development against the relevant policies and objectives, is provided in the following sections of this Report:

- European Legislative requirements
- National Planning Policy
- Regional Planning Policy
- Wexford County Planning Policy

## **Project Description**

The site is immediately adjacent and to the northwest of Rosslare Europort at Rosslare Harbour, County Wexford.

The Project Development Boundary encompasses a total area of 80.3 hectares, lying mostly in the maritime area and comprising 48.4 hectares of capital dredging area, 27.7 hectares of reclamation from the sea, and 4.2 hectares of terrestrial reclamation and will include two new berths specifically designed for handling the largest components used in the construction of wind turbines.

### **Key Project Elements**

- **Capital Dredging:** The navigation channel will be dredged to a depth of -10 metres Chart Datum (m CD). The berth pocket for ORE Berth 1 will be dredged to a depth of -12 m CD. The total area to be dredged is 48.4 hectares.
- **Land Reclamation:** Land reclamation using the marine dredged material and imported rockfill to create 27.7 hectares of land for the proposed development.
- **ORE Storage Area:** Creation of an ORE Storage Area of 19.7 hectares within the reclaimed lands for the handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components.
- **ORE Berth 1:** Construction of ORE Berth 1, a heavy lift berth with a continuous open piled quay length of 330 metres.
- **ORE Berth 2:** Construction of ORE Berth 2, with a continuous open piled quay length of 240 metres.
- **ORE Compound:** A compound area of 0.2 hectares for installation of modular buildings for site offices, welfare, logistics, and parking to service ORE developers.

### **New Small Boat Harbour:**

Construction of a new small boat harbour consisting of:

- a 50 metre long fixed quayside berth and an 80 metre long floating pontoon,
- a 2.4-metre-wide pontoon to provide 64 no. berths,
- a 127-metre-long floating pontoon with 10 no. berths,
- 1 no. fixed berth for emergency service vessels,
- 10 no. single storey storage sheds,
- a slipway for launching and recovery activities,
- marine enabling works and installation of services to provide for potential future uses.
- Slipway & Sea Scouts Facility:

Construction of a slipway to the western flank of the newly reclaimed lands with a new storage shed and parking to accommodate local clubs, such as the Sea Scouts.

### **Ancillary works:**

- Site access to the ORE Hub from the existing port access road.
- New access road and footpath/cycle track to the new small boat harbour.

- A medium voltage single storey electrical substation and switch room.
- Fencing and security.
- Parking.
- Waste-management facilities.
- Fire-water network and storage.
- Landscaping.
- Foul-water network and pumping infrastructure.
- Water-mains network.
- Surfacing and drainage.
- Environmental enhancements.

### **Report of Coastal Planning Authority**

Where a marine application is made under section 291 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, the coastal planning authority(s) for the area(s) may, in accordance with section 291(4) of the Act, prepare and submit a report to An Coimisiún Pleanála within 10 weeks of the making of the application to An Coimisiún Pleanála. The report should set out the views of the authority on the effects of

- the proposed development on the environment,
- the implications of the proposed development for maritime spatial planning,
- the likely effects on any European site where relevant and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the authority, having regard, in particular, to the matters specified in section 34(2) and in section 282(2) of the 2000 Act.

The coastal planning authority is requested to carry out an early examination of the documentation sent to it in order to determine its adequacy for the purposes of the preparation of its report. Any perceived shortcomings should be notified to An Coimisiún Pleanála in writing at an early stage.

Before submitting the report to An Coimisiún Pleanála in relation to a proposed development, the manager of the coastal planning authority must submit a copy of the report to the members of the authority seeking their views. The members may accept the report, or by resolution, decide to attach recommendations specified in the resolution to the report and where those members so decide, those recommendations and the administrator's record shall be attached to the report submitted.

Section 291(5) provides that An Coimisiún Pleanála may require a coastal planning authority or any planning authority on whose functional area the proposed development is, in the opinion of An Coimisiún Pleanála, likely to have a significant effect to furnish An Coimisiún Pleanála such information as An Coimisiún Pleanála may specify in relation to the implications of the proposed development for maritime spatial planning; implications for proper planning and sustainable development in the functional area concerned; and, the likely effects of the proposed development on the environment of any European site.

If the planning authority is notified of the planning application as a prescribed body, it is not necessary to submit a report to An Coimisiún Pleanála as referred to above. A submission/observation can be made to An Coimisiún Pleanála within the time frame as referred to in the public notice. The planning authority as a prescribed body is not subject to payment of a fee for the making of a submission or observation.

### **Purpose of this Report**

The purpose of this Report is to describe the nature and extent of the proposed development, its principal features, and to provide an overview of the relevant national, regional and local planning policy context to assist An Coimisiún Pleanála in its determination of the Application. This Report also demonstrates that the Proposed Development is consistent with the relevant national, regional and local planning policies/objectives, and would, therefore, be in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

This Report should be read in conjunction with all the plans and particulars accompanying the Application to An Coimisiún Pleanála, an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

### **Statutory Application Consultation**

As part of the Application process, further consultation will take place. This will include:

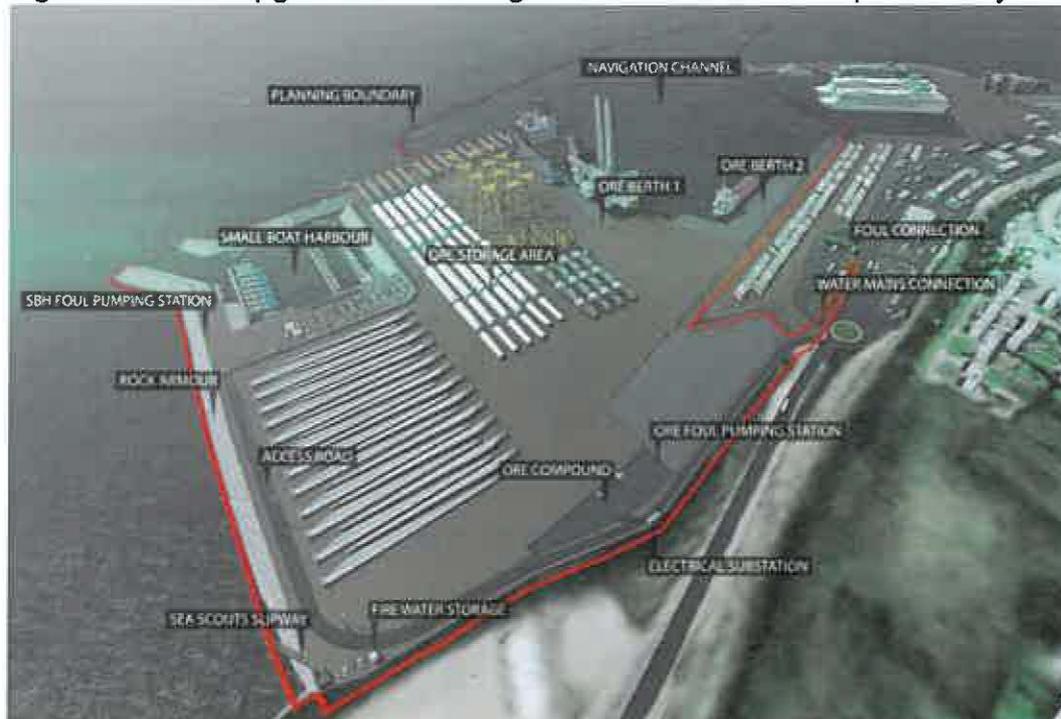
- Issuing details of the Application to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's EIA Portal.
- Direct consultation with the relevant Prescribed Bodies, Coastal Authorities and Transboundary Bodies as required under S292(3) of the Act.
- Placing a public notice in one national newspaper (the Irish Independent)
- Placing a copy of the application and all accompanying documents on display in the offices of An Coimisiún Pleanála and the offices of Wexford County Council, being the relevant coastal planning authorities.
- Access to all plans and particulars associated with the Application will also be facilitated via a dedicated project website at: [www.rosslarehub.ie](http://www.rosslarehub.ie)

Any submissions/observations arising from the Application consultation and notification process will be submitted directly to, and considered by, An Coimisiún Pleanála as part of the Application assessment process.

### **Site Location**

The proposed development is located in a site immediately adjacent to the Rosslare Europort, which is situated in County Wexford. The port lies southeast of Wexford Town and is strategically positioned at the southern end of the Irish Sea, offering direct maritime access to key offshore wind development zones in the Celtic Sea and Irish Sea. The Proposed Development Boundary (i.e., the area where development

- The location is serviced by existing public transport links (bus and train services)
- Other locations along the Wexford coast which are rural in nature would require significant road upgrades increasing the environmental footprint of any development.



*Proposed Rosslare ORE Hub*

### **Need for, and Benefits of the Proposed Development**

The ORE Hub is part of Iarnród Éireann strategic plan for Rosslare Europort. The ORE Hub will enable efficient handling and storage, marshalling, staging and integration of ORE components for offshore wind farm projects. The ORE Hub aligns with policy frameworks across all governance levels and is critical to meeting Ireland's climate and energy security goals.

This planning report identifies the strategic policy support at European, National, Regional and Local levels for the development of offshore renewable energy development in Ireland that will support the transition away from fossil fuels emitting sources of energy and towards greener renewable energy. There is a critical yet unfulfilled need for offshore wind in Ireland and urgent action is required to meet Ireland's strategy of increasing renewable energy generation.

### **Economic Benefits of the Proposed Development**

- Facilitate an increase in the use of renewable energy generation.
- Provide security of supply for Ireland and lead to an increase in the production of domestic energy.
- Make a significant contribution on decarbonising energy and meeting Ireland and EU's binding energy targets.
- Will create job opportunities in rural and underdeveloped areas.

## **European Legislative Requirements**

### **EU Offshore Renewables Energy Strategy 2020**

To ensure that offshore renewable energy can help reach the EU's ambitious energy and climate targets for 2030 and 2050, the European Commission published a dedicated EU strategy on offshore renewable energy (COM/2020/741) on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020, which proposes ways to support the long-term sustainable development of this sector.

The strategy aims to increase offshore wind capacity to around 25 times its current level, and facilitate the commercialisation of new offshore renewable technologies, such as tidal, wave and floating solar energy. The EU strategy sees potential for a vast increase in the volume of electricity generated from offshore wind.

The Strategy sets targets for an installed capacity of at least 60 GW of offshore wind and 1 GW of ocean energy by 2030 rising to 300 GW and 40 GW, respectively, by 2050, as part of its much broader European Green Deal (December 2019) to decarbonise Europe's energy consumption.

The European Commission estimates that investment of nearly €800 billion is necessary between now and 2050 to meet its proposed objectives, with most of the investment anticipated to come from the private sector.

### **REPower EU 2022**

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022, the European Commission presented its REPower EU plan, which seeks to end both the EU's energy dependency on other countries, and to make further advances in tackling the climate crisis by transforming Europe's energy systems. It seeks to do so by saving energy, diversifying energy supplies, and producing clean energy.

The plan recognises that wind energy, in particular offshore wind, represents a significant future opportunity for the green and secure energy future of the EU. The plan aims to further strengthen the EU wind sector's global competitiveness and achieve the REPower EU ambition with fast wind energy deployment, supply chains need to be strengthened and, permitting, drastically accelerated. 2030 EU Climate and Energy Framework.

The 2030 EU Climate and Energy Framework provide a framework for climate and energy policies in Europe. The framework seeks a 40% reduction in EU Green House Gas (GHG) emissions from 1990 levels with a greater contribution from renewable energy sources.

### **Other relevant European Legislation**

Directive (EU) 2023/2413 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 and Directive 98/70/EC as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources, and repealing Council Directive (EU) 2015/652 (RED III Directive)

S.I. 274 of 2025 – European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025

S.I. 426 of 2025 – European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) (No. 2) Regulations 2025

S.I. 435 of 2025 EU (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) (No. 3) Regulations 2025

DHLGH Circular CEPP 1/2025 - European Union (Planning and Development) (Renewable Energy) Regulations 2025

## **National Planning Policy**

### **The Climate Action Plan 2019**

This plan supports the development of necessary transmission infrastructure to support Ireland's national renewable electricity target and, in the long term, a more sustainable electricity supply. The Plan is also supportive of the development of an offshore electricity grid, in tandem with new interconnection, to allow Ireland to balance its significant renewables potential with security of electricity supply and develop long-term ambitions to export its offshore renewable resources.

EU Directives 2009/28/EC and 2018/2001/EU on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources. The 'Renewables Directive' (2009/28/EC) provides a requirement for 20% of the EU's total energy consumption across the electricity, transport and heat sectors to be from renewable sources by 2020. Under the terms of the Directive, each member state is set a target which will contribute to the overall EU goal. Ireland's target is that 16% of all energy consumed across the three sectors is to be from renewable sources by 2020. In addition, at least 10% of transport fuels must come from renewable sources by 2020

In December 2018, the revised Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001/EU came into force. The new directive establishes a new binding renewable energy target for the EU for 2030 of at least 32%, with a clause for a possible upwards revision by 2023. Wexford County Council will therefore support such development, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria, including impacts on residential and visual amenity.

### **National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP)**

The National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) sets out Ireland's strategic approach and measures to achieve the 16% renewable energy target by 2020, which includes the following:

- 40% electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020 (RES-E)
- 10% of transport energy from renewable sources by 2020 (RES-T)

- 12% of heat energy from renewable sources by 2020 (RES-H)

### **Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy – Policy Statement 2024**

The Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy is an overarching framework for long term delivery of ORE, identifying key actions and future directions that will be addressed through subsequent policy to develop and initiate a long term, plan-led approach to the ORE future in Ireland.

The policy Statement reiterates the ambitious targets of 5GW of ORE by 2030, 20GW by 2040 and at least 37GW in total by 2050

### **Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030**

Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) pledges to increase electricity generated from renewable sources to 70%, of which there will be at least 3.5GW of offshore renewable energy. This has been revised upwards since the adoption of the plan in 2020 to 5 GW of offshore renewable energy.

The NECP also supports the target of a 30% reduction in non-ETS greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (from 2005 levels).

The NECP recognises that Ireland has one of the best offshore renewable energy resources in the world with a sea area of 900,000 square kilometres. Achieving the goals to decarbonise electricity will require significant investment, to build out relevant infrastructures and to expand capacity to integrate new renewable technologies such as offshore wind energy.

The NECP includes the assumption that the deployment of offshore wind capacity will grow from 2025 onwards, in line with assumptions from Ireland's 2019 Climate Action Plan, highlighting an urgent impetus to develop offshore wind energy to meet its climate targets.

### **National Marine Planning Policy Framework**

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) was published by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and is intended to represent the marine equivalent to the National Planning Framework. The framework adopts an ecosystem-based approach and brings together all marine based human activities for the first time, outlining the government's vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity.

The NMPF creates the overarching framework for decision making that is consistent, evidence-based and secures a sustainable future for the maritime area and all applications for activity or development in Ireland's maritime area will be considered in terms of their consistency with its objectives.

The importance of the marine environment for Ireland is highlighted by the NMPF, as follows:

*'As an island nation with sovereign rights over one of the largest sea areas in Europe, Ireland's economy, culture and society is inextricably linked to the sea. Our marine environment is a national asset that yields multiple commercial and non-commercial benefits from sectors such as seafood, tourism, recreation, renewable energy, cultural heritage, and biodiversity.'*

Noting the importance of the marine environment, the NMPF sets out the 'Overarching Marine Planning Policies' (OMPPs) which will ensure the sustainable management and use of Ireland's marine environment and which '...apply to all proposals capable of having impacts in the maritime area'.

A secure, sustainable and affordable supply of energy is of central importance to Ireland's economic and social wellbeing' and notes that 'Ireland has some of the best offshore renewable energy resources in the world.'

The initial focus for ORE will be in developing wind in the shallower waters off Ireland's eastern and southern coasts, in line with current technology maturity and our target of achieving 5GW of capacity in offshore wind by 2030'.

A detailed assessment of the proposed development against the NMPF's has been undertaken by GoBe Consultants as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. The detailed assessment demonstrates that there is overall compliance between the Proposed Development and the relevant objectives and policies of the NMPF. In the very limited instances, where significant environmental effects have been identified and where it has not been possible to implement the hierarchy of mitigation provided for in objectives and policies, the need for and benefits of the proposed development, set out in this Report, support the reasons for proceeding.

#### **Climate Action Plan 2024**

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is integral to the National Development Plan 2021-2030 and sets out how Ireland can accelerate the actions required to respond to the climate crisis, putting climate solutions at the centre of Ireland's social and economic development.

Ireland's statutory climate objective is a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030 (relative to the 2018 Levels) and net zero emissions no later than 2050. This requires the need for the full implementation of the CAP, and any future Climate Action Plans. CAP24 was approved in May 2024 following the completion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment. It is the third annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2019.

CAP24 builds upon the previous year's Plan by refining and updating the measures and actions required to deliver the carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings. The Plan provides a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.

Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23), the predecessor of CAP24, was pivotal for offshore wind development in Ireland as it specified the urgent need for offshore wind energy. Since CAP23, an Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce has been established, tasked with developing a system-wide plan for delivery of offshore wind in Ireland.

Chapter 12 of CAP24 outlines specific goals for renewable energy, focusing on solar, onshore wind, and offshore wind generation. It states that the national target for offshore wind is at least 5GW Offshore Wind by 2030 with an increase in renewable generation to supply 80% of demand by 2030, through the accelerated expansion of onshore wind and solar energy generation, developing offshore renewable generation, and delivering additional grid infrastructure.

CAP24 notes that the scale of Ireland's offshore renewable opportunity has been estimated to be 37 GW. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) commit to updating the plan every 12 months in a manner that is underpinned by consultation with key stakeholders.

Updates to the plan will be informed, inter alia, by corrective actions that may be needed to stay on track toward the overall 2030 targets and the ultimate objective of achieving a transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient, and environmentally sustainable society and economy by 2050.

#### **Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2021-2030**

The Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP) identifies strategic priorities for public capital investment in order to underpin the implementation of the NPF.

The NDP identifies strategic priorities for public capital investment in line with the NPF. It is a strategic priority of the NDP to have a new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme. A strategic investment priority in renewable energy is for regular Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) auctions, which have delivered competitive levels of onshore wind and solar electricity generation which indicatively could be up to 2.5 GW of grid-scale solar and up to 8 GW of onshore wind by 2030. The RESS is also committed to financially supporting the delivery of up to 5 GW of additional offshore renewable electricity generation by 2030. The NDP commits to increasing the share of renewable electricity up to 80% by 2030. This is an unprecedented commitment to the decarbonisation of electricity supplies. In the unprecedented scale of development in the renewable sector, the NDP recognise the contribution of the private sector to support the ambitions of the Government.

#### **Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy**

The Future Framework is the long-term model and vision for offshore renewable energy (ORE) in Ireland. The policy sets out the pathway Ireland will take to deliver 20GW of offshore wind by 2040 and at least 37GW in total by 2050.

The Future Framework for Offshore Renewable Energy is one of the key actions published under the Offshore Wind Energy Programme.

The guiding principles of the policy include the protection of maritime environment and biodiversity, affordability of energy for consumers, an equitable return to

communities, alignment of policy and infrastructure, inspiring confidence for investment, emphasising technological innovation, illuminating opportunities for return to the state and prioritising stakeholder and public engagement.

### **Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (amendment) 2021**

- Places on a statutory basis a 'national climate objective', which commits to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy.
- Embeds the process of carbon budgeting into law, the Government is required to adopt a series of economy-wide five-year carbon budgets, including sectoral targets for each relevant sector, on a rolling 15-year basis, starting in 2021.
- Actions for each sector will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan, updated annually.
- A National Long Term Climate Action Strategy will be prepared every five years.
- Government Ministers will be responsible for achieving the legally binding targets for their own sectoral area with each Minister accounting for their performance towards sectoral targets and actions before an Oireachtas Committee each year.
- Strengthens the role of the Climate Change Advisory Council, tasking it with proposing carbon budgets to the Minister.
- Provides that the first two five-year carbon budgets proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council should equate to a total reduction of 51% emissions over the period to 2030, in line with the Programme for Government commitment.
- Introduces a requirement for each local authority to prepare a Climate Action Plan, which will include both mitigation and adaptation measures and be updated every five years. Local authority Development Plans will also align with their Climate Action Plan.
- Public Bodies will be obliged to perform their functions in a manner consistent with national climate plans and strategies and furthering the achievement of the national climate objective.

### **National Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP)**

Ireland's National Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) for Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) is a strategic framework under the [Maritime Area Planning Act 2021](#), designed for the sustainable development of offshore wind by designating specific marine areas for ORE, ensuring a plan-led approach, balancing energy goals with environmental protection, and guiding future projects towards Ireland's 2030 climate targets. Following the initial South Coast DMAP, a national DMAP proposal was published in September 2025 with extensive public consultation planned through

2026 – 2027 aiming for completion in 2027 in order to provide spatial certainty for delivering 20GW of ORE by 2040.

### **Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan I and II**

Published in 2014, and reviewed in 2018, Ireland's first Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPlan) provided a framework for the sustainable development of Ireland's Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) resources, setting out key principles, policy actions and enablers for delivery of Ireland's significant potential in this area. The OREDPlan I is guiding the State's policy approach to achieving 5GW of ORE by 2030, mostly through fixed-bottom wind turbines in relatively shallow waters of up to 70 metres off the east and southeast coasts.

The OREDPlan was subject to SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) and for the purposes of the Plan, the marine area was assessed by way of six Assessment Areas. Within the SEA, the development potential for fixed wind development in Assessment Area 2 for the East Coast South Area (where the Proposed Development is located) that could be accommodated without likely significant adverse effects on the environment was found to range between 3000 and 3300 MW (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, 2014, SEA). This range took into account the offshore wind developments in Irish waters that had then been approved by means of the foreshore consenting process including Arklow Bank Windfarm (520 MW) as well as other projects such as Codling Bank (approximately 1,100 MW) and the proposed Dublin Array offshore wind farm (approximately 214 MW).

### **The National Planning Framework**

The National Planning Framework is the Government's high level strategic plan for the future growth and development of the country to the year 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private sector investment in the country.

The NPF supports the progressive development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, including domestic and international grid connectivity through the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPlan). Wind energy is currently the largest contributor of renewable energy and it has the potential to achieve between 11-16GW of onshore wind and 30GW of offshore wind by 2050 (SEAI, 2016). The sector can make a significant contribution to meeting national energy demands while attaining our energy and emissions targets for 2020 and beyond.

### **National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework**

Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland to enable the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy. It is an objective to

ensure effective co-ordination of climate action with the Climate Action Regional Offices and local authorities to implement the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework in the development and implementation of long-term solutions and extensive adaptation measures.

### **The White Paper: Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030**

The White Paper recognises that Ireland's sea area is around ten times the size of its landmass and the country has one of the best offshore renewable energy resources in the world. Ireland's geography offers significant potential for offshore wind, wave and tidal energy.

The plan cites the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA), which provides a framework for the sustainable development of the offshore wind. It notes that exchequer support for ocean research, development and demonstration is being increased under the OREDPA. It states that offshore wind has been effectively used in other EU Member States and can yield a higher relative energy output than onshore wind due to scale. It also recognises the potential for Ireland's offshore resource to be a potential export opportunity.

## **Regional Planning Policy**

### **Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy**

The Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSSES) sets out a 12-year strategic development framework for the South East Region. The strategy sets out a framework to support the national 'Project Ireland 2040' and aims to guide development in the region. The Strategy seeks to implement national policy in relation to transitioning to a low carbon economy.

The RSSES supports the implementation of the Government's Climate Action Plan, and the RSSES has identified three priority areas for action to address climate change and to bring about a transition to a low carbon economy and society. These include decarbonisation, resource efficiency and climate resilience.

**RPO77** Maritime Spatial planning - Consistency and Alignment: "It is an objective to support the integration of different uses in the marine environment and ensure consistency and alignment between high-level plans such as the National Marine Planning Framework, regional based approaches to maritime spatial planning and localised coastal management plans and local integrated coastal zone management plans. It is important to be cognisant of the need to promote cross boundary management of coastal areas within the Region. Any development of plans in coastal zones should be informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment."

**RPO 85** To promote regional cooperation in terms of offshore renewable energy development, environmental monitoring and awareness of the benefits of realising the Region's offshore energy potential. Initiatives arising from this objective shall be subject to robust feasibility and site selection, which includes explicit consideration of

likely significant effects on European Sites and potential for adverse effects on the integrity of European sites in advance of any development.

**RPO95 Sustainable Renewable Energy Generation:** “It is an objective to support implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), and the Offshore Renewable Energy Plan and the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in their respective SEA and AA and leverage the South East Region as a leader and innovator in sustainable renewable energy generation.”

**RPO 99 - Renewable Wind Energy:** “It is an objective to support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (on shore and offshore) at appropriate locations and related grid infrastructure in the Region in compliance with national Wind Energy Guidelines.”

**RPO 219 New Energy Infrastructure:** “It is an objective to support the sustainable reinforcement and provision of new energy infrastructure by infrastructure providers (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to ensure the energy needs of future population and economic expansion within designated growth areas and across the Region can be delivered in a sustainable and timely manner and that capacity is available at local and regional scale to meet future needs.”

**RPO 222 Electricity Infrastructure:** “It is an objective to support the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity and to support and facilitate the development of enhanced electricity networks and facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this plan under EirGrid’s (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process) to serve the existing and future needs of the Region and strengthen all-island energy infrastructure and interconnection capacity.”

In summary, the SRSES supports renewable industries and requirements for transmission and distribution infrastructure, delivered in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner. The SRSES recognises the potential to harness renewable energy across the Region to achieve climate change emission reduction targets. The SRSES is supportive of the future growth of renewable energy technologies in the region and its contribution to the decarbonisation of the region.

In taking the SRSES as a whole, the proposed development aligns with the relevant topic areas in the SRSES including Economy, Environment and Strategic Energy Grid and is consistent with the SRSES when assessed against the relevant RSOs and RPOs.

### **Wexford County Development Plan 2022- 2028**

The Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment carried out for the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA) (DCENR, 2014) found that it would be possible to achieve the high scenario of 4,500 MW from offshore wind and 1,500 MW from wave and tidal devices in Irish Waters without likely significant adverse effects on the environment. The east coast of Wexford is

identified as suitable for wind and tidal development, while the south coast of Wexford is identified as suitable for wind only.

The following Chapters of the Wexford County Development Plan contain objectives which are relevant for the assessment of the Proposed Development:

- Chapter 2 - Climate Change
- Chapter 6 - Economic Development Strategy
- Chapter 9 - Infrastructure Strategy
- Chapter 10 - Environmental Management
- Chapter 12 - Coastal Zone Management & Marine Spatial Planning
- Chapter 13 - Heritage and Conservation

**Objective NH08:** To ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed by the competent authority imperative for reasons of overriding public interest.

**Objective PT02** To support, subject to the objectives of this section and Volume 10 Energy Strategy, connecting infrastructure for the integration of low carbon and renewable energy generation projects including community scaled projects with power transmission infrastructure.

**CZM15** To support the achievement of Ports of National Significance Tier 1 status for Rosslare Europort, and to provide for the appropriate development of Rosslare Europort and other harbours in the county to ensure the effective growth and sustainable development of the county and the region subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

**ES24:** To support the development of offshore renewable energy in accordance with the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, 2014), the Climate Action Plan 2019 and any Maritime Spatial Plan that is adopted for Ireland.

**ES25:** To actively explore and pursue opportunities to service the marine renewable energy sector at existing ports, to facilitate the growth of new ports, supporting infrastructure and associated development, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.

**ES26:** To facilitate the expansion of ports and provision of additional quayside harbour working areas to further enhance their attractiveness to marine renewable industry developers.

**ES29:** To support the development of Rosslare Europort as a Sustainable Energy Zone (SEZ) and provide the necessary infrastructure to facilitate its development as Objective

**ES36:** To facilitate the development of port infrastructure to serve marine renewable developments, subject to normal environmental and planning criteria, the Habitats and Water Framework Directive SEZ.

### **Wexford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029**

The Wexford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 (WXCAP) sets out how Wexford County Council will be responsible for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, across the County. The mission statement of the plan is “to transition County Wexford to a Climate Resilient, Biodiversity Rich, Environmentally Sustainable and Climate Neutral Economy.”

With respect to offshore wind energy projects the WXCAP states: ‘The offshore wind industry offers strong commercial possibilities for the port [Rosslare] and County in general. It will also provide much needed infrastructure to enable Ireland to reach its renewable energy targets into the future. (Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 -2029)

## **Environmental Impact Assessment Report**

As the Proposed Development is development of the Eighth Schedule, and is situated partly on land and partly in the nearshore area of a coastal planning authority, the application for development permission will be submitted to the statutory planning authority, in this case An Coimisiún Pleanála, per section 291 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, as inserted by Section 171 of the MAP Act 2021, as amended.

### **Purpose of the EIAR**

The purpose of the EIAR is to present the findings of a systematic assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of development proposals. The main aim of the EIAR is to inform the public and the competent authority of the findings of the assessment of potential effects. The EIAR recommends measures for avoiding, and minimising identified environmental effects, and reassesses potential effects post mitigation to determine residual effects.

A full EIAR report has been prepared and submitted with the planning application (EIAR prepared by Gavin & Doherty GeoSolutions). This EIAR has been triggered where the thresholds in respect of Paragraph 1(a) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) are exceeded by the proposed development.

### **EIA Portal Notification 2025230**

### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation is a central feature of the design and environmental assessment process. There are three types of mitigation considered in the EIAR.

- Primary mitigation relates to the location, design or timing of the project which are intended to avoid and reduce significant adverse effects on the environment.
- Secondary mitigation is further activity required to achieve the anticipated outcome where potentially significant adverse effects have not been avoided by project location, design or timing or require to be further reduced to within acceptable levels.
- Tertiary mitigation includes measures that are required regardless of an EIA assessment. It includes measures that are set out in legislation and/or are standard sectoral guidance and best practices. These measures are standardised and are covered by law or other controls. As such, these measures are not presented in extensive detail in the EIAR.

## **Likely Significant Environmental Effects**

### **Soils, Geology, Hydrogeology & Contamination**

The environmental effects were assessed following a 'source-pathway-receptor' model which considers a connection between the source of contamination and a sensitive receptor via an environmental pathway (i.e., land, water, air).

### **Baseline Environment**

A desktop review of a wide range of information sources within a defined study area was undertaken. It included onshore and offshore elements. In general, the geology, soils and hydrogeology receptors were found to be of low or negligible sensitivity. There was no evidence of contamination within the site.

### **Assessment of Effects**

Construction activities which were assessed include site clearance, temporary site establishment, road construction, construction plant, equipment and storage of materials and hard landscaping and surfacing; marine works comprising reclamation, quayside wall and berth construction, piling, blasting, capital dredging, excavation and earthworks, construction of rock armour revetment and placement of breakwater armour units. Operational activities include storage of ORE components, machinery associated with landside ancillary work, maritime vessels, and storage of fuels and chemicals on-site. The assessment of effects includes consideration of integrated measures that have been built into the project design (i.e., primary mitigation), and which are intended to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects. No significant adverse effects are predicted. 4.1.3

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

No significant adverse effects were identified; therefore, no further (secondary) mitigation measures were necessary. However, additional measures are outlined to ensure any impacts on the receiving environment are minimised during construction. It is considered that these measures will reduce the likely impact to lower magnitudes than predicted by the assessment of effects.

#### **1. Coastal Process**

Data from various sources, including desktop reviews, public databases, site-specific surveys, and numerical modelling, were integrated to establish baseline conditions. Rosslare Europort and its immediate vicinity are heavily modified, with minimal natural coastline remaining. Despite this, the area is close to several important European conservation sites called Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), including the Seas off Wexford candidate SPA (cSPA) and Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA, as well as SACs that support protected species like Harbour seal and Harbour porpoise. The coastline in the study area is at high risk of erosion, a problem exacerbated by climate change, induced

sea level rise and increased storminess. The coastal geomorphology includes sandy beaches, rocky outcrops, and artificial structures of Rosslare Europort.

### **Assessment of Effects**

The construction of structures, such as quays and breakwaters, has the potential to alter the flow of water and the patterns and characteristics of waves and currents, leading to changes in seabed and coastline composition and morphology. The assessment identified that the Proposed Development Rosslare ORE Hub Page 14 may result in effects of negligible, minor and moderate significance to Coastal Processes receptors, the area near to the Proposed Development related to increased suspended sediment concentrations during construction activities and to reduced tidal current speeds and reduced significant wave heights during the operational phase. No significant effects were identified from construction phase activities. Effects on Rosslare Strand from long-term changes in tidal and wave regimes and sediment transport due to the Proposed Development were assessed as of minor significance and therefore not significant in EIA terms. Effects on the area near to the Proposed Development from these changes were assessed as of moderate significance and therefore significant in EIA terms.

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

During construction, dredging and reclamation area infilling may increase suspended sediment in the water. Real-time turbidity monitoring will be carried out at Rosslare Europort. If suspended sediment concentrations rise above threshold levels, measures such as adjusting the weir box, reviewing construction methods, and temporarily halting dredging will be implemented to manage and prevent excessive sediment release. During operation, monitoring of changes in bathymetry and coastal topography will inform management, which the applicant will undertake in close liaison with Wexford County Council and the Office of Public Works to ensure appropriate management measures are put in place as needed. No significant residual effects are expected from the construction phase of the Proposed Development, owing to effective turbidity monitoring and management measures. While the operational phase may lead to changes in wave climate and tidal regime within 1km of the site, mitigation strategies for increased accretion and erosion will reduce these impacts to minor significance, resulting in no significant residual effects overall in EIA terms.

## **2. Water Quality & Flood Risk**

Baseline water quality was established through a review of water quality status and risk classifications in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and supporting environmental standards. This comprises a large study area of onshore and offshore elements which spans river and transitional watercourses including the Milltown Rosslare stream, Rosslare Town and the South Slob Channel, to the offshore coastal waterbodies such as the Southwestern Irish Sea and Rosslare Harbour. Currently, these waterbodies display moderate to good status, although several are deemed to be at risk of environmental degradation in quality.

### **Assessment of Effects**

Activities that may cause potential effects on the water environment during construction of the Proposed Development include key general construction activities such as demolition, temporary site establishment, road construction, construction plant, equipment and storage of materials and hard landscaping and surfacing, marine works comprising reclamation, quayside wall and berth construction, piling, blasting, capital dredging, excavation and earthworks, construction of rock armour revetment and placement of breakwater armour units.

During the operational phase, activities include storage of ORE components, machinery associated with landside works, LoLo and RoRo activities, maritime vessels, and storage of fuels and chemical on-site. The following key risks to water quality were identified as potentially significant in the absence of secondary mitigation:

- Potential adverse effects on water quality through increased suspended sediment levels from sediment runoff and plumes generated during land reclamation and infill, piling, capital dredging, and material dispersal.
  - Potential adverse effects on water quality through release of highly alkaline contaminants from concrete and cement during quayside wall and berth construction.
  - Potential adverse effects on water quality due to accidental fuel or chemical compound leakages from construction plant, machinery associated with landside ancillary works, maritime vessels, equipment and storage of renewables materials polluting waterbodies.
  - Potential adverse effects on water quality due to accidental release or leakage of other liquids on-site, such as wastewater associated with temporary site facilities.
- With regards to flood risk, the assessment of effects concluded that integrated measures that have been built into the design will sufficiently reduce or avoid the otherwise potentially significant effects associated with increases in impermeable surface run-off and risk of coastal flooding due to tidal inundation and predicted sea level changes.

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

Secondary mitigation procedures related to construction impacts affecting the water environment are set out within the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan which accompanies this application. Key measures to reduce, avoid or offset the potential effects, include:

- A Water Quality Management Plan will be prepared and implemented by the Main Contractor ahead of construction to manage water quality throughout the construction and operation Rosslare ORE phases. This includes sound design practices, temporary surface water management, and treatment systems for stormwater.
- During land reclamation, excavated dredged material will be placed in a controlled manner to prevent excess sediment dispersion into the water. Methods for sediment

plume monitoring and erosion controls are outlined in the detailed CEMP prior to commencement of construction works.

- To minimise sediment disturbances during piling, mitigation measures will include a piling risk assessment, controlled Risk Assessment Method Statements, and erosion controls to limit sedimentation. These measures will be outlined in detail by the main contractor within the detailed CEMP prior to commencement of construction works.
- A Dredging Management Plan will be prepared and implemented by the Main Contractor ahead of construction and will govern dredging activities to prevent sedimentation in the water column. This includes measures such as using back-hoe dredgers or trailing suction hopper dredgers, minimising over-spilling, and monitoring sediment dispersal.
- To minimise contamination from concrete, careful control of wet concrete and cement will be implemented, including bunded washout areas, wheel washes, and ensuring mixing buffers from waterbodies. Special fast-setting mixes will be used where applicable. These measures are set out in the oCEMP.
- Spill risks from construction machinery and material storage will be controlled by adhering to strict site management practices, including bunded storage and emergency spill kits. Existing oil spill response plans will be followed, and MARPOL (the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) regulations will ensure vessels comply with international pollution prevention standards. These measures are set out in the oCEMP.
- Measures will be taken to prevent wastewater contamination, including the use of containerised waste facilities and emergency spill kits. Surface water drainage points will be mapped to prevent the flow of pollutants into water bodies. These measures are set out in the oCEMP. When proposed mitigation measures are fully implemented during the construction and operational phases, all slight and significant adverse predicted effects on water quality will be imperceptible/not significant.

When proposed mitigation measures are fully implemented during the construction and operational phases, all slight and significant adverse predicted effects on water quality will be imperceptible/not significant. Overall effects on water quality arising from the proposed development are considered to be minimal and the development is considered to be compliant with the environmental objectives of the WFD and water quality objectives for sensitive waterbody receptors.

### **3. Terrestrial Ecology**

This chapter evaluates the importance of the terrestrial ecological resources present and defines the degree of significance of potential impacts resulting from the proposed development.

## **Baseline Ecology**

The Terrestrial Ecology study area includes the PDB and extends to adjacent habitats. A review of available published data was carried out to identify features of ecological importance, along with field surveys which were focused on habitats, volant mammals (bats), non-volant terrestrial mammals (otter, badger, other small mammals), and herpetofauna receptors. Survey data were collected in 2023 provided by INIS Environmental Consultants Ltd., who were commissioned to undertake ecological surveys within the terrestrial footprint of the proposed development to detail site usage, activity patterns of key species, and the distribution and extent of habitats at the site. Key factors determined from field surveys include habitat quality, species presence and sensitivity, and ecological connectivity. Habitats within the area were evaluated for ecological value. Through an evaluation of potential terrestrial ecological receptors identified in the baseline, Key Ecological Receptors (KERs) were identified and assessed further to determine potential construction and operational impacts from the Proposed Development on Terrestrial Ecology. The following Terrestrial Ecology KERs have been identified:

- Bats
- Otter
- Common Lizard
- Marram Dunes (White Dunes)
- Embryonic Shifting Dunes

## **Assessment of Effects**

Approximately 1.8 hectares of existing habitat will be removed, primarily consisting of artificial surfaces and scrub. The habitats removed include:

All habitats designated for removal are valued at Local Importance (Lower Value). While they may exhibit some biodiversity value and are not characteristic of areas with extremely low species diversity (e.g., amenity grassland, improved agricultural grassland), they do not support rare or protected species or provide significant ecological functions at a scale beyond the local level. Their permanent loss is not expected to impact the conservation status of these habitats or any protected species. Given the limited extent of removal, no significant effect is anticipated at any geographic scale.

## **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

Mitigation measures including lighting design to reduce impacts on bats; Marine Mammal Observer pre-watches prior to underwater noise producing activities commencing (i.e., blasting and piling) for otters; and pre-construction surveys for habitats and species will be implemented to minimise impacts on terrestrial ecology receptors. With the full implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the Terrestrial Ecology chapter, the proposed development is not expected to result in significant residual effects during the construction or operational phases. However, it is acknowledged that certain impacts, such as residual light spill on bats, may result

in minor residual effects. These effects are anticipated to be limited in scale and not significant at a population level. With the proposed mitigation measures implemented, the overall significance of ecological impacts from the proposed development is anticipated to be slight or lower. Therefore, the construction and operation of the proposed development will not result in significant effects on any terrestrial ecological receptors.

#### **4. Ecology**

##### **Baseline Ecology**

The predominant habitat within the study area is described as a mosaic of infralittoral (shallow subtidal zone) and circalittoral (deeper shallow subtidal zone) coarse sediment as described in EIAR Chapter 11, grab sampling, drop down video surveys and walkover surveys were conducted in 2023 and 2024 to obtain detailed information on the ecology of the area.

##### **Assessment of Effects**

The identification of impacts and assessment of effects on the benthic ecology within the Zol indicated the following potential impacts:

- Physical loss (to land or freshwater habitat).
- Habitat structure changes - removal of substratum (extraction).
- Changes in suspended solids (water clarity).
- Smothering and siltation rate changes (light and heavy).
- Introduction of invasive non-indigenous species (INIS).
- Introduction of shading and light. Assessment of significance of these impacts on benthic receptors determined no significant effects in EIA terms.

##### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

The sediment dispersal modelling carried out indicated that Suspended Solids Concentration (SSC) and seabed thickness changes resulting from dredging and reclamation work will be below levels with the potential for significant effects during construction. However, with due regard to the precautionary principle, it is recommended that turbidity monitoring is carried out to ensure SSC levels (and thereby the potential for increased bed thickness changes) do not exceed the predicted values and that a system of appropriate action is implemented in the event that SSC rises above levels with the potential for significant effects are detected.

The dominant subtidal biotope (a sub-unit of a habitat) found within the study area is vulnerable to the potential introduction of INIS as a result of increased vessel traffic and the creation of new structures. It is therefore proposed that an INIS management plan is put in place to mitigate the potential for effects on this biotope.

## **5. Marine**

Existing research and field surveys were used to identify important marine mammal species in the study area. Of the 26 species of whales and dolphins found in Irish waters, up to nine have been seen in the Irish Sea. Common dolphin, harbour porpoise, and bottlenose dolphin are seen year-round, while Risso's dolphin appears in summer and killer whale is rarely spotted near the coast. The Irish Sea is an important feeding area for baleen whales like fin whale and minke whale, with minke whale most often seen in the summer. Fin whale is more common from late summer through autumn. Humpback whale is seen less often, mostly from late summer to January. Some species, such as killer whale and fin whale, only occasionally pass through the area and do not use it as a main feeding ground.

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

The proposed development is not expected to result in any significant residual effects on marine mammals, during either the construction or operational phase. Residual effects are limited to the local scale and are considered to be of minor significance, i.e., there are no significant residual environmental impacts on marine mammals, which occasionally pass through the area and do not use it as a main feeding ground.

## **6. Ornithology**

### **Baseline Ecology**

Key terrestrial species considered in the assessment were meadow pipit and yellowhammer, while key waterbird species included red-throated diver and common scoter.

### **Assessment of Effects**

The Ornithology assessment considered impacts on the key terrestrial and waterbird species and populations in the vicinity of the proposed development. The key potential impacts considered by the assessment were disturbance impacts to birds during construction, indirect impacts on prey species resulting from dredging activities, and the permanent loss of foraging habitat for waterbirds resulting from the construction of the proposed development. There were no significant impacts predicted from the proposed development on birds during construction. The proposed development is coastal with no predicted significant effects on offshore ornithology from the operational phase.

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

Mitigation measures for birds include conducting any construction activities that could result in habitat removal outside of the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive). In addition, following the completion of construction activities, appropriate planting of native shrub species around the edge of the site is recommended to provide additional opportunities for nesting birds and other wildlife. No ecologically significant adverse residual effects on birds have been predicted.

## **7. Commercial Fisheries**

In 2022, the SFPFA recorded 1,267 tonnes of seafood, valued at €2.969 million, which landed through Rosslare Europort. Whelk were the main species landed, accounting for 869 tonnes or 68% of the total by weight. These were valued at €1.364 million at first point of sale. Scallop were in second place with 212 tonnes (17%, €0.801 million) and razor clams in third place with 97 tonnes (8%, €0.603 million). The balance comprised 89 tonnes of various crustaceans (spider, brown, and velvet crab, and lobster) making up 7% of the total and valued at €0.199 million. In 2022, seafood landing through the port of Rosslare generated benefit to the southeast region totalling €8.7 million in added value; employed or created employment through fishing, post-harvest Rosslare ORE Hub processing and other downstream activities for 107 persons (70 directly employed, 25 indirectly and 12 induced) and contributed an annual wage bill of €3.3 million to the region. The fleets responsible for this activity are the scallop, razor clam, whelk, and crustacean fleets which are considered to be of high socio-economic value.

### **Assessment of Effects**

Provision of access to any port facilities for existing users, the overall significance of the effects of these impacts is considered slight and not significant in EIA terms.

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

Mitigation planning and to provide ongoing liaison with fishers throughout all stages of the proposed development, will ensure effects are minimised on fish and fisheries receptors.

## **8. Cultural Heritage**

A single known cultural heritage site is located within the PDB; namely, the Lighthouse at the pier head (NIAH15704829).

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

Mitigation through avoidance is the primary mitigation against effects to cultural heritage receptors for any undiscovered features. More generally, archaeological monitoring will be carried out, with the proviso to record any archaeological material observed in the course of such works.

## **9. Traffic & Transport**

The main route into Rosslare Europort is the N25 national primary route, and this is the only route considered in the assessment. The proposed N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road (REAR) comprises the construction of approximately 1.45km of high-quality single carriageway road consisting of a combination of improved existing road and a new road corridor to provide a new access route to Rosslare Europort in Co. Wexford.

### **Assessment of Effects**

During construction of the ORE Hub, the average number of vehicle movements has been calculated based on dredging /reclamation, staff arrivals, ongoing works, excavation and earth works, surfacing of port storage yard, construction of rock armour revetments, and concrete works. This calculation gives a total of 7,078 vehicles. Averaged out over the 24-month construction programme, this equates to 10 vehicles per day.

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

The average number of vehicular movements that will be generated from operational activities at the ORE Hub from 2040 has been calculated as an average of 834 trips per day. Of these trips, 16.03% will be HGVs, resulting in an average of 134 new HGV trips per day (below 30%). Based on these additional traffic flows, the proposed development is considered to result in imperceptible changes in the environmental effects of traffic, and the effects to transport and access during the operational phase from 2040 would be permanent, slight, adverse and not significant.

### **10. Shipping & Navigation**

The proposed development is entirely within the port limits of Rosslare Europort. Vessel traffic primarily consists of commercial traffic, with Roll-on / Roll-off passenger ferries bound for Wales, England, Northern Ireland and other European destinations accounting for 70% of vessel movements. Cargo ships, tankers, fishing vessels, recreational craft and tug, and service vessels were also identified from automatic identification system data. The port infrastructure includes three commercial berths, a small craft berth, and a fisherman's quay. The RNLI lifeboat station is currently situated between commercial berths 2 and 3.

### **Assessment of Effects**

The construction and operation of the proposed development can have impacts on shipping and navigation receptors, including port operations, search and rescue, passenger ferries, small fishing boats and recreational craft.

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

Existing embedded controls are sufficient to manage predicted effects on Shipping and Navigation. Therefore, no secondary mitigation is required.

### **11. Population & Human Health**

Population in EIA is typically assessed through consideration of socioeconomics, such as economic impacts for employment and social effects such as impact of construction on quality of life and wellbeing issues such as settlement and land use, transport and amenity of the people living in the area.

### **Assessment of Effects**

Population baseline information included review of available data sets to give context for the population, demographic trends, employment and socio-economic indicators.

Settlement patterns, land use, transport, services and local amenity including visual, recreational, and tourism were also outlined. Human health baseline information included an overview of public health, local air quality and noise, water quality and flood risk.

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

There are employment opportunities during the construction of the proposed development, with a positive effect at a local level, however, they are not significant in EIA terms. The construction of the proposed development is largely marine in nature, however, there is a predicted increase in traffic. Operational phase human health effects from changes in local air quality and noise are considered not significant.

## **12. Seascape, landscape & Visual Assessment**

The landscape is characterised by a relatively flat coastal plain, featuring low but steep escarpments, sea cliffs, and anthropogenic elements linked to the Rosslare Europort. Over time, the coastline has shifted from a naturalistic form to a more engineered one to support port activities. Land use in the area is diverse, predominantly shaped by the port's operations, with freight storage, a boat harbour, and the national railway line separating the port from urban Rosslare.

### **Assessment of Effects**

During the construction phase of the proposed development, there will be a significant and short-term increase in activity and physical disruption at the site, including the creation of reclaimed land and various infrastructure works. These activities will cause substantial changes to the local seascape and coastal context, particularly within 250 metres of the site, where impacts are deemed 'Very High' in magnitude and 'Significant' in EIA terms.

### **Mitigation & Residual Effects**

The main mitigation by avoidance measure employed in this instance is the siting of the proposed development within an existing busy port complex so it will not appear out of place or inappropriate along the coastline. Furthermore, the site is contained to the north of a steep escarpment along the coastline adjacent to Rosslare Harbour, resulting in partially screened and heavily screened views of the proposed development.

## **Conclusion**

Mitigation is a central feature of the design and environmental assessment process. There are three types of mitigation considered in the EIAR.

- Primary mitigation relates to the location, design or timing of the project which are intended to avoid and reduce significant adverse effects on the environment. The primary mitigation measures are inherent in the proposals for the ORE Hub which are described in the EIAR.

- Secondary mitigation is further activity required to achieve the anticipated outcome where potentially significant adverse effects have not been avoided by project location, design or timing or require to be further reduced to within acceptable levels.
- Tertiary mitigation includes measures that are required regardless of an EIA assessment. It includes measures that are set out in legislation and/or are standard sectoral guidance and best Rosslare ORE Hub Environmental Impact Assessment.

Having regard to the EIAR, associated documents submitted, and the further information, it is considered that the EIAR would accord with the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU (EIA Directive) and have identified and described adequately the direct and indirect significant effects of the development on the environment. It is concluded that the proposed development by itself, and in combination with other development in the vicinity, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed, would not give rise to negative impacts on human health; on land, soil, water, air and climate; material assets, or cultural heritage.

### **Appropriate Assessment (AA)**

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that: Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objective.

The AA Screening Report presents an assessment of whether the proposed development, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European Site(s) in view of best scientific knowledge and the site-specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) of the site(s). European Sites, also known as Natura 2000 sites, are those identified as sites of European Community importance designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive or as Special Protection Areas (SPA) under the Birds Directive. The report has been prepared by Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd. (NOD) and Gavin and Doherty Geosolutions (GDG) on behalf of Iarnród Éireann - Irish Rail to inform Stage 1 of the AA process to be undertaken by An Coimisiún Pleanála (hereafter 'the Commission'), as the competent authority, in considering the application for planning permission for the proposed development.

### **Aim of the AA Report**

This report includes information to support Stage 1 of the AA process (Screening for AA), as required under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) which has been transposed in Ireland under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ('the Planning Acts'). The report also supports the development consent application process and provides the necessary information to the Commission to assist them in making an informed decision on the likely significant effects of this project on Natura

2000 sites, and their designated Annex I habitats and Annex II species Qualifying Interests (QIs), and their designated Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species. The immediate receiving environment of the proposed development at Rosslare Europort consists of a variety of industrial infrastructure, marine and terrestrial habitats. Rosslare Europort is a major commercial port with robust connections to Ireland, the UK, and mainland Europe. This area is highly developed, with existing port facilities including ferry berths, cargo handling areas, and a small boat harbour, all protected by substantial rock armour revetment and breakwater armour units designed to shield the harbour from coastal conditions. The N25 road provides access to the port, and the Irish Rail line runs parallel to the site, reinforcing its industrial character. The coastline is largely artificial, with hardstanding, paved areas, and structures linked to port operations.

The port itself lacks major ecological corridors like rivers, treelines, or forests; instead, its primary connection is through the marine environment. More diverse habitats, such as dunes and tidal sandflats to the southeast of the Port and dunes, estuaries, and wetlands that exist in the wider region around Wexford Harbour and the Slaney River Valley, offering richer foraging and shelter for wildlife.

## **Baseline Information**

### **Ornithology**

Consultations with Birdwatch Ireland and NPWS, published survey data and site-specific baseline bird surveys were used to inform the baseline. Published survey data used to inform the baseline included:

- Irish-Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS), which includes recent non-breeding season monthly count data of waders, wildfowl and gulls for estuaries and water bodies at coastal sites in County Wexford between 2018/19 and 2023/24
- ObSERVE 2016 and ObSERVE II 2021 & 2022 fine-scale aerial surveys conducted in summer, autumn and winter 2016, in summer and autumn 2021 and summer, autumn and winter 2022 to assess the occurrence and distribution of seabird species in inshore coastal waters off the southeast, south and south-west coasts of Ireland
- Burnell et al. (2023) Seabirds Count national colony census data. Published data from a census of breeding seabirds in Ireland and UK between 2015 and 2021.
- Cummins et al. (2019) The Status of Ireland's Breeding Seabirds: Birds Directive Article 12 Reporting 2013 – 2018. NPWS published report.
- Seabird Monitoring Programme. Online seabird colony counts <https://app.bto.org/seabirds/public/index.jsp> Online database of seabird colony counts in Ireland and UK – most recent data from Seabirds Count national census 2015-2021.

- Balmer et al. (2013) Bird Atlas 2007-11: The Breeding and Wintering Birds of Britain and Ireland. Online database of historic and recent bird records from national atlases and other datasets.

Project-specific ornithology surveys were conducted between April 2022 and September 2024 inclusively to gather data informing the impact assessment of ornithological receptors for the proposed development. The ornithology survey area covered a 1.5km buffer from shore, which included the proposed development Boundary and surrounding areas in the vicinity. A diverse range of seabirds, waterfowl, waders, and terrestrial species—including passerines, grassland birds, and raptors—were recorded throughout the survey period. Some species were only present during the breeding season (e.g. terns), while others were present throughout the year, although they were more abundant during summer or winter months (e.g. gannet, gull species). The majority of wader species were recorded in low numbers during winter months.

### **Benthic Ecology**

Benthic Ecology describes the benthic habitats within and adjacent to the Proposed Development Boundary and concluded that the community complexes found are common in Ireland and no rare or unusual fish or shellfish species were recorded.

### **Marine Mammals**

SACs with Annex II marine mammals of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) that are present in the Irish Sea include cetaceans; Bottlenosed dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) and Pinnipeds; Grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) and Common (Harbour) seal (*Phoca vitulina*). There are a number of SACs designated for Annex II species in close proximity to the proposed development.

Carnsore Point SAC and Blackwater Bank SAC are the closest sites where Harbour porpoise was added as a QI in March 2024 (NPWS 2024a & NPWS 2024b). Slaney River Valley SAC includes Harbour seal as a marine mammal.

The review of published studies undertaken indicates that the waters off the south-east coast of Ireland, where the proposed development is located, are used by harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphin, grey seal and harbour seal.

### **Fish Ecology**

Surveys undertaken by Inland Fisheries Ireland in September 2009 for the Upper Slaney Estuary recorded seven species including salmon (2No.) and river/brook lamprey (1No.). Within the Lower Slaney Estuary, 15 species were recorded, these did not include any of the five Annex II species designated as part of the SAC. The River Slaney has a reasonable run of spring salmon that varies each year, and fishing is controlled by local Angling Associations. The Wild Salmon & Sea trout

Statistics report 2022 recorded 187no. Salmon in total over the spring and winter salmon season.

There is a potential that Annex II fish present within the proposed development Boundary will be temporarily displaced by noise. Potential injury to fish species during construction activities is predicted to be very limited and confined to within 170 m from blasting activities. The threshold will not be exceeded for piling or dredging activities.

### **Terrestrial Ecology**

A project-specific terrestrial ecology desk study has been completed. Field surveys for species were undertaken in 2023 on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025. A walkover ecology and drone survey were undertaken to check for otter signs and invasive non-native flora and produce an updated terrestrial ecology habitat map within the terrestrial footprint of the proposed development

No flora protected under the Flora (Protection) Order 2022 or listed as threatened on the Irish Red List were recorded within the Proposed Development Boundary.

Multiple otter spraints, couches, prey remains and well-defined trails through horsetail/scrub along the sedimentary sea cliffs and hard breakwater were recorded on the 2025 survey.

No evidence of other non-volant mammal species such as Badger (*Meles meles*), Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*), Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*), West European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) or Irish Stoat (*Mustela erminea hibernica*), were recorded during the Field Surveys.

### **Natura 2000 Sites with the Potential to be Affected by the Proposed Development**

Site-Specific information and modelling data has informed an understanding of the potential for connectivity between Natura 2000 sites and the impacts associated with the Proposed Development activities to identify the Natura 2000 sites to be assessed for likely significant effects

The Seas off Wexford cSPA partially overlaps with the proposed development will result in the permanent loss of 0.245km<sup>2</sup> of potential seabed foraging habitat from the Seas off Wexford cSPA, which represents less than 0.01% of the total area of the cSPA.

The proposed loss of habitat is in an area dominated by *Abra alba* and *Nucula nitidosa* in circalittoral muddy sand or slightly mixed sediment. This habitat, which is characterised by non-cohesive muddy sands or slightly shelly/gravelly muddy sand, is extensive along the southeast coast of Ireland.

Baseline data therefore suggest the 0.245km<sup>2</sup> of seabed habitat which will be lost will not result in an insufficient number of locations, area, and availability of suitable

habitat to support the SCI species of the Seas off Wexford cSPA population or an insufficient number of locations, area, and/or availability of forage biomass to support the population targets.

### **Conclusion of the Appropriate Assessment Report**

The screening for Appropriate Assessment Report has been completed in compliance with EU and Irish law and the relevant European Commission and national guidelines to determine whether Likely Significant Effects on any Natura 2000 site could be excluded as a result of the proposed development.

It cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually and in combination with other plans or project, will have a significant effect on the following Natura 2000 sites:

- Carnsore Point SAC
- Blackwater Bank SAC
- Slaney River Valley SAC

### **Transboundary Effects**

The nature and location of the proposed development - within Rosslare Europort, a sheltered coastal environment, limit the potential for transboundary effects. While some mobile marine species may range across national waters (e.g., pelagic fish, marine mammals, seabirds), the physical and acoustic impacts of construction (e.g., noise, turbidity) are predicted to be localised and do not extend beyond Irish waters. Sediment dispersion and noise modelling confirm that the spatial extent of pressure propagation remains within the Irish Economic Zone and does not approach the European Economic Zone boundary. Where there is no pathway for transboundary effects on the environment of another country, there will be no transboundary effects on the environment of another country

### **CONCLUSION**

The proposed Rosslare ORE Hub development fundamentally aligns with the strategic European, National, Regional, and local policies prioritising renewable energy in Ireland. This alignment reflects the significant policy support for renewable energy initiatives, making this development a critical component of Ireland's renewable energy future and further consolidates Rosslare Europort as a port of national importance.

This Planning Report sets out the proposed developments compliance with strategic European, national, regional and local policies/ strategies/ frameworks/ plans for renewable energy projects in Ireland and demonstrates significant strategic policy support for renewable energy projects which is a significant material consideration in the assessment of the Application.

The proposed development, if approved, would be able to facilitate the efficient handling and storage of ORE components for offshore wind farm projects nationally and potentially internationally. The proposed development would also make a

significant contribution to enabling Ireland to achieve legally binding targets for the reduction GHG emissions. The proposed development will assist in achieving the following objectives of the relevant national, regional and local planning policy context:

- transitioning to a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.
- ensuring a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system.
- harnessing the considerable offshore potential from wind energy sources.
- increasing the quantum of our electricity needs from renewable sources. increasing renewable energy deployment in line with EU targets.
- progressively develop Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential; and strengthen Ireland's energy security and resilience.

It is noted that the site itself is located near Natura 2000 sites. There is potential for possible oil spillages to result in some birds falling victim to oiling, these birds would form part of the conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites which would be distant from the current site. It is considered that subject to the stated construction and mitigation methods, and the normal operations of such a facility will ensure that minimal significant negative impacts would result which would impact on the Conservation values off any Natura 2000 site.

We wish to inform the Inspectorate of the importance to keep minimal impacts on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) along the Wexford coast, given the impacts on habitats identified in the accompanying EIAR. We respectfully request that the case Inspector consider the environmental impacts of the proposed development in accordance with the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 and recommend that the mitigation measures outlined in the accompanying EIAR be implemented in full.

The proposed development may involve quantities of oils and lubricants. Assurances are sought from the applicant that any spill will be addressed swiftly and effectively, with the applicant being held liable for any environmental damage within County Wexford.

This proposal is an intensification of the use of the port; it is an important milestone in the transition to enabling Ireland to achieve relevant climate targets and is welcomed by Wexford County Council. It is considered that while the proposed development will have limited and minimal impact on the surrounding amenities visually and from a noise perspective. It is considered that the proposed development would not be incongruous within the existing working port setting in which it is located and can be considered an extension to an already existing port.

Wexford County Council does wish to bring to the attention of the Inspectorate that there are a number of objectives contained within the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 that pertain to the development and expansion of Rosslare Europort and support the support the achievement of Ports of National Significance Tier 1 Status for Rosslare Europort. We wish to inform the Inspectorate of Section 8.7.1.1 and Objective TS62 of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 where it is

an objective to promote the development of the access road and link roads to Rosslare Europort.

The proposed development will deliver significant economic benefits during the construction and operational phases. This investment will deliver the following benefits to Ireland, the southeast regional area and County Wexford in particular.

The proposed facility will place the region at the forefront of offshore wind development in the Irish and Celtic Seas, a new industry for Ireland that has the potential to create thousands of new high value employment opportunities. These opportunities will occur directly within the port providing increased local employment during both construction and operation of the new port facility as well as opportunities with windfarm developers, operators and the supply chain during both the construction and operational stages of the windfarms.

Currently there are limited facilities in the Republic of Ireland capable of being used for offshore wind construction. Developing an offshore wind enabling facility at Rosslare, capable of servicing offshore wind construction will ensure that this key stage in windfarm development is not lost to alternative ports. This will have a knock-on effect in the development of and location of supporting industries in areas such as logistics, planning, environmental, marine and engineering services, and research within proximity to Rosslare and County Wexford. The South East Technological University (SETU) and the Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board will play a key role in developing apprenticeships and progression paths including Research and Development opportunities in this strategic economic pillar for the County and Region.



*Image of the Proposed Rosslare OBE Hub*

Taking account of the overarching strategic and statutory policy support for the proposed development, it is considered that it complies with relevant planning policy and is acceptable in respect of its significant economic benefits.

Having regard to the location of the development within an existing harbour, the provisions of the Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 which support Renewable Energy and Economic Development. It is considered that the proposed Rosslare ORE Hub would accord with the zoning objectives for the area, and the need to promote Renewable Energy and Climate Adaption. The development would not give rise to negative impacts in terms of residential and visual amenity, public health, traffic safety and would accord with proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



**Eddie Taaffe**

**Chief Executive**

**Wexford County Council**